

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins, comprising systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally administering to a patient in need thereof an essential amino acid having a branched side chain in an amount sufficient to suppress proliferation of abnormal prion proteins and wherein the essential amino acid is selected from the group consisting of isoleucine, leucine, valine and mixtures thereof.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Currently amended) The method according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein said amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for providing an essential amino acid having a branched side chain to a patient in need thereof, comprising systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally administering said essential amino acid having a branched side chain so as to suppress proliferation of abnormal prion proteins wherein said essential amino acid is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and mixtures thereof.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said essential amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine.

7. (Currently amended) A suppressive agent containing an essential amino acid having a branched side chain as an active ingredient for suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and mixtures thereof.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) The suppressive agent according to claim [[8]] 7, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine.

10-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) A method for treating prion diseases by suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins which comprises systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally administering to a patient in need thereof an essential amino acid having a branched side chain as an active ingredient, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and mixtures thereof and wherein the essential amino acid is administered in an amount sufficient to suppress proliferation of abnormal prion proteins.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Original) The method according to claim 13, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion disease is scrapie.

17. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion disease is bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion disease is Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD).

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion disease is Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker syndrome.